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Events Destinations Management

In this chapter you will cover:

- Events tourism
- Cultural tourism
- Niche tourism through events
- Developing communities' culture through events/festivals
- Managing visitors for events
- Cultural and economic impacts
- Event destination security and economic growth

This chapter introduces the concept of events tourism. Events tourism and tourism destinations are intrinsically linked. Cities and regions throughout the UK and the European Union have developed strategic policies for encouraging tourism when associated with festivals and events. Festivals attract cultural tourists to local community events and promote enriching exchanges between tourists and residents. Where there are established migratory travel routes, and communities which have emerged through patterns of diaspora and immigration, these are sites which are often able to host particularly distinctive festivals and events. The case studies within this chapter explore the development of cultural tourism and multicultural festivals and events within the UK, and the positive contribution that these events play in solidifying community relations.

Events tourism

Events and festivals play a significant role for towns and regions. Historically, events were staged for the benefit of the local community and were concerned with key calendar moments and seasonal activities (Buch et al., 2011). The purpose of hosting events therefore, concerned social and cultural benefits, not economic ones. In more recent years, local events and festivals are being used as a destination marketing tool and a mechanism to enhance tourism development (Derrett, 2004). There are many economic benefits to be realised from events tourism and events can be big business for destinations. Getz (2005) identified several travel motivators for tourists which fell into four categories: physical, cultural, interpersonal and prestigious/status, and argued that events were able to satisfy all of these motivations. Getz and Page (2016: 598) further highlight that:

Event tourism is not usually recognized as a separate professional field. Mostly it is seen as an application of, or speciality within national tourism offices (NTOs) and destination marketing/management organizations (DMOs). Event development agencies (as opposed to agencies focused on protocol, arts and culture which also deal with planned events) embody event tourism completely, and there are a growing number of associated career paths or technical jobs.

The events play an important role in tourism destination management and create physical products and services, which include the infrastructure, facilities, local community festivals, musical attractions, hospitality and transportation. The events play a critical role for the destination by attracting visitors to a host destination and having an impact on the local hospitality industry and transportation. These visitors enhance the destination marketing publicity by creating a tourism economy for the host cities

Festival organisers are now using historical and cultural themes to develop annual events to attract visitors, and create cultural images in the host cities by holding festivals in community settings. The desire for festivals and events is not always specifically linked to the needs of any one particular group. Events are often developed because of the tourism and economic opportunities they present, and also the social and cultural benefits they offer. Many researchers have argued that local communities play a vital role in developing tourism through festivals.

Governments now support and promote events as part of their strategies for economic development, nation building and cultural tourism. In turn, events are seen as an important tool for attracting visitors and image building within different communities. According to Stiernstrand (1996), the economic impact of tourism arises principally from the consumption of tourism products in a geographical area. According to McDonnell et al. (1999), tourism-related services, which include travel, accommodation, restaurants and shopping, are the major beneficiaries of events.

As far as events and tourism are concerned, the role and responsibilities of the government, private sector and society in general have significantly changed over the last decade. Where previously the state had the key responsibility for tourism development and promotion, we are now in a world where the public sector

is obliged to reinvent itself by relinquishing its traditional responsibilities and activities in favour of provincial, state and local authorities. This suggests that festivals impact on the host population and stakeholders in a number of ways, including social, cultural, physical, environmental, political and economic, all of which can be both positive and negative.

The current trend in almost all regions of the world is towards semi-public but autonomous tourism organisations engaged in partnerships with both the private sector and regional and/or local authorities. Together they have a role to play in the development, organisation and promotion of destinations. Host organisations, in marketing terms, reach niche as well as mass audiences, not simply through increasing visitor numbers at events but by creating powerful associations with the destination in the mind of visitors. In this respect, multicultural communities have a key role to play in creating narratives and themes which are the basis for diverse festivals and events. To paraphrase the eminent cultural studies academic, Colin Hall (1994), multicultural events and festivals have the capacity to create linkages between culture, place and identity.

Events and festivals are found in all societies and are seen as unique tourist attractions for the organisers and destination image-makers, constituting one of the most exciting and fastest growing areas within the tourism industry. The phenomenon known as 'event tourism' originated in the 1980s. Event and festival organisers recognised the opportunity to enhance the development of event tourism as a brand to attract consumers and also to reassure tourists that they will get the promised benefit from the chosen destination. The approach, as Getz (2005) explains, advocates a mixture of science and art:

Actual mechanisms of image-making are part science and part art. The science is in researching the needs, motives and perceptual processes of potential customers. The art is producing an event or products to meet the needs and in effectively communicating the strengths of the attraction. (Getz, 2005: 369)

Getz (2005) believes that many countries and destinations fail to recognise the advantages of events and are often unable to manage negative images and publicity. Getz also states that due to rising competition, tourist regions and communities should strategically plan in order to achieve their environmental, social and economic objectives.

Events have the potential to generate a vast amount of tourism when they cater to out-of-region visitors, although definitive data on the impact of event tourism is not available due to the complexity and diversity of the industry. A report commissioned by Visit Britain, *Understanding Business Visits* (2018, p.10) states:

In 2018 the UK welcomed 8.4 million business visits – continuing to slip down after the 2016 record. In 2018 business visits accounted for over 1 in every 5 visits to the UK (22%), around the same as the year before. Business visitors spent a combined £4.5 billion in the UK during 2018. Despite the recent slowdown in the last couple of years, in 2018 visits and spend were still well above the low point in 2009: +28% in visits and +22% in spend. Furthermore, business visits in the first six months of 2019 were up 1% on January–June 2018 and business spend up 9%.

A Mintel report (2018) highlighted that British people spend £129 billion on leisure activities. The report indicates that by 2022 it is expected to be a 17% increase in spending on leisure in the five years to 2018 with a projection of £141 billion by 2022. The Mintel report also states:

Online gaming and betting (up 67%), music, concerts and festivals (up 35%) and tenpin bowling (up 28%) were the top three fastest growing leisure markets by value between 2012-17. In contrast, nightclubs was the worst performing sector of the leisure industry, suffering a 18% decline between 2012 and 2017.

A London Borough of Lambeth council report (2015) further supports the argument that the UK events industry has increased since the 2012 Olympics, generating over 530,000 full-time jobs, and was worth over £36.1 billion in 2012, increasing to £42.2 billion by 2015 and to £48.4 billion in 2020. Spending on the events industry in the USA in 2018 indicates similarly high figures.

- Meetings and events generate \$1,294 of spending per participant per year
- Six million international visitors generated \$38 billion of direct spending
- International visitors – travel spending 21.8%
- International visitors – shopping 24.6%
- International visitors – recreation and entertainment 26.5%

In addition, festivals have an important role in the national and host community in the context of destination planning, enhancing and linking tourism and commerce, as they have become more of a tourist attraction over the last ten years, which has had a great economic impact on the host communities. The events industry has developed due to the expansion of information technology and media networks. Festival organisers now utilise these new communication tools to advertise their event to a wider audience.

Community events are developed to create cross-cultural diversity within the wider community and to enhance economic value for local ethnic minority communities. Events such as African and Caribbean carnivals and Asian melas have given the local communities a sense that they are of long-term cultural benefit to the host city. Such events can promote cross-cultural understanding and social integration among local communities and visitors.

Cultural tourism

Cultural tourism is defined by the International Cultural Tourism Charter in the following way:

Domestic and international tourism continue to be among the foremost vehicles for cultural exchange, providing a personal experience, not only of that which has survived from the past, but of the contemporary life and society of others. (ICOMOS, 1999)

Culture can be seen as a sense of identity; it also refers to the importance that individual people place on local and national social organisations, such as local governments, education institutions, religious communities, work and leisure. Cultural tourism describes tourists who take part in cultural activities while away